

in the history of this country. It comes out to about \$290-some-billion. But that means to the average household a \$3,000 tax increase. What household can absorb a \$3,000 tax increase in just 1 year alone?

Unfortunately, that is not the only record being set by the Democrats. They have doubled that record in terms of how much money they have spent, over \$800 billion, which would come to \$6,000 per family. American people would be better if we didn't set records like that.

NASA ASTRONAUT SUNITA WILLIAMS

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to rise today to acknowledge the achievements of NASA astronaut Sunita Williams.

On Friday, June 22, Sunita returned to Earth after spending 195 days in space. She now holds the record for the longest duration space flight by a woman. Also, after completing four space walks lasting a total of 29 hours, 17 minutes, she is a record holder for the most hours outside a spacecraft by a woman.

I was at the emotional STS-117 crew return welcome a few weeks ago at Johnson Space Center and saw firsthand how Sunita's achievements serve as an inspiration to so many young people, particularly young ladies, interested in pursuing their dreams of space exploration. She has shown them that if they work hard and are dedicated, they too can one day reach the stars.

□ 1015

THE CAUSE OF CLEANING UP CONGRESS HAS GROUND TO A HALT

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, despite promises that are only 6 months old, the cause of cleaning up the Congress has ground to a halt.

We should kill pensions for Members of Congress convicted of a felony. And after passing a shadow bill in January, this action has completely stalled. No action in February, March, April, May or June.

Now the real surprise. Despite promises of spending reform, Congressional leaders blocked efforts to stop funding the construction of the bridges to nowhere. That's right. Democratic leaders in Congress now support building the bridges to nowhere, one structure, connecting to an island with just 50 people, the other to an island with only 22, at a cost to the U.S. taxpayer of over \$1 billion. Only 6 months into a new Congress, and now Congressional leaders do not want to kill pensions for Congressional felons, but do want to build the bridges to nowhere.

SCHIP

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, I was proud to spearhead one of the first State initiatives to enable working families to purchase private health insurance for their children; 5 years later Congress passed the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, enabling every State to implement its own plan.

Today 6 million American children have health coverage thanks to SCHIP. We in Congress are building upon the extraordinary success of SCHIP to extend it to almost 9 million American children who are now uninsured. The goal of insuring all American children is within our reach.

Yet, instead of working with Congress to reach this goal, the President this week made it clear that health insurance for children is not important to him.

Does the President really believe that America's children do not deserve quality ongoing health care? Does the President really believe that emergency rooms are the best place for primary care for children?

It is clear to just about every American that health insurance is expensive, and for too many American families, it is simply too expensive.

Congress recognizes the urgency of the situation, and we move ahead, unlike the President, to take this opportunity to cover every American child.

DALITS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I hosted a screening of a documentary entitled, "India's Hidden Slavery," a film about contemporary slavery in India among the 250 million Dalits or untouchables.

The caste system has at the top the Brahmin or priestly class, the ruling class. That includes politicians. At the very bottom, not even considered a caste because they're too low, the Dalits. Today, in the world's largest democracy, an unknown hidden system exists with people without basic human rights.

In contrast to the economic progress in some sectors in Indian society, below the surface is a society still racked by caste, with millions suffering and held hostage to a social structure that reinforces segregation, poverty, injustice and slavery. Recently, village leaders just condemned to death a couple that married outside their caste.

While the government of India has taken some small steps to outlaw the caste system, in reality, it permeates every aspect of life there.

I commend India for its economic progress, but I urge government leaders to ensure that all people in India have basic human rights, and especially the 250 million Dalits.

THE IRAQ WAR

(Mr. HODES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is in its fifth year, but the Bush administration still refuses to develop a realistic, strategic plan for the Middle East and Iraq.

The Iraq War has destabilized the region, and the United States must reassert and protect its fundamental national security interests by actively taking the necessary steps to stabilize the Middle East.

Today Congress will debate a plan which stands in stark contrast to the delusional policies of the Bush administration which have sapped our military readiness, strengthened al Qaeda, wasted our resources and betrayed the trust of the American people.

There is a way forward, and we must be bold, courageous and strategic. Without leadership in the White House, we must continue to exercise leadership in the people's House. And I assure the American people that we will.

MISSING OR CAPTURED AMERICAN SOLDIERS

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. You know, we shouldn't even be discussing surrender in Iraq today because 2 months ago today, three American soldiers were captured in Iraq. Tragically, the body of Private First Class Anzack was found a few days later in the river. DOD has changed the status of Specialist Jimenez and Private Fouty from unknown to missing/captured. Considering that the military found their IDs in an al Qaeda safe house, I'm sure they're being mistreated. And I hope and pray that they can stay alive until we can rescue them.

As a former prisoner of war for nearly 7 years in Vietnam, I know what these guys are going through. We must find them, and we must bring them home. Naysayers in Washington should not be talking about pulling the plug on our troops in Iraq when we have our own men missing in action who need to be rescued.

SCHIP

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, in our Energy and Commerce Committee, we're